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Alumni Abroad

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ALUMNI ABROAD

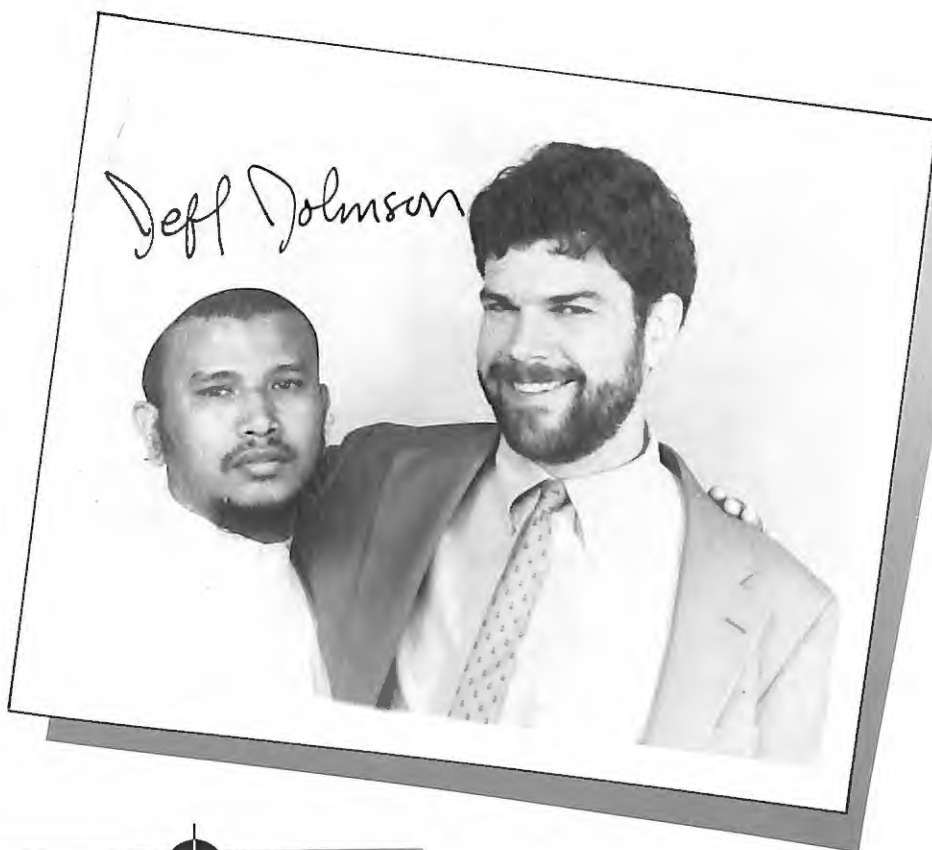
As the Law School's reputation and influence reach to nearly all corners of the world, alumni are applying their legal skills in ever more diverse and exotic settings. For them, the old activist slogan "Think globally, act locally" has become a way of professional life.

This growing "internationalization" of UB Law and its alumni can be attributed to the continuing development of the international curriculum, including several new initiatives in teaching, research and public service. In recent years, students have been exposed to increased international and comparative law course offerings and visits from foreign legal scholars. A bold international public service program began last year, and an active faculty conducts research and lectures abroad. Most importantly, two new research and education centers were established in fall 1989: the Canada-United States Legal Studies Centre and the multi-national, interdisciplinary Human Rights Centre.

Recently, we caught up with a handful of alumni who are practicing abroad, or studying for advanced degrees, and have learned to confront international issues on a daily basis. Like any sampling of UB-trained lawyers, their professional interests are diverse. While living and working amid cultures most of us have only read about, they are involved in matters that range from actions brought against foreign corporations involved in unlawful trade practices to the pursuit of international criminals.

For all of them, the training they received at UB Law has played a key role in unraveling the complexities of those and other international legal issues. Here, they share the good and the bad of the working life abroad.





Jeffrey C. Johnson '84
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Even before the recent turmoil in and around his adopted country, Jeffrey C. Johnson became familiar with the deeply religious outlook that underlies life in a Muslim society. Johnson has been employed in a small private practice in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, for the past year and a half. There he must cope with a legal system utterly unlike the Western model.

"There is very little statutory law in Saudi Arabia," Johnson says. "The legal 'system' is called Shari'a Law, which is a body of law somewhat similar to the common law, but based on the fundamentals of Islam as set forth in the Koran and the teachings of Mohammed."

Johnson's long-term goal is to work primarily in international commerce. Other than tending bar in Britain, this is his first working experience overseas. His position includes representing Western corporations and banks in negotiating and preparing joint venture contracts, financing agreements, technology licenses, distributorships and related commercial transactions.

"Don't work in a lesser industrialized country unless you like the work," he says. "Money alone is not a good enough incentive."

Though the working conditions are "very similar to a small law firm in any Western country," Johnson says that living conditions "are too bizarre to easily explain."

For example, "one must be prepared to cope with the Muttowah, the religious police, who patrol public areas to make sure everyone is behaving as a good Muslim should behave. These gentlemen scrutinize Westerners in general, and Western women in particular, and will not hesitate to yell at or even hit (with small sticks) any woman they consider to be immodestly dressed. Black full-length gowns called 'habayas,' together with head scarves, are the fashion in Saudi Arabia ...

"Westerners, and most non-Arab residents, are segregated from the local population both socially and physically. Westerners typically live in walled-off compounds. While these barriers can be broken down to some extent, the process is slow, difficult, and not encouraged by the social structure."

Lidwyn M. Brokx '89
Brussels, Belgium

Lidwyn M. Brokx has spent the past year juggling international legal systems, on her way to obtaining an LL.M. degree in international and comparative law.

As the administrative seat of the European Economic Community, the Belgian capital of Brussels was the perfect place to take on that challenge. As one of 40 lawyers from 20 countries in the program at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brokx studied EEC law and its aspects including competition, judicial protection, fundamental freedoms, transportation, environment and agricultural law.

But "EEC law does not function in a vacuum," Brokx says. "It functions alongside Member State law and replaces any Member State law with which it may conflict. Thus, any lawyer must be aware of not only the laws of the Member States, but also the EEC law which may be applicable to the legal situation."

In her second year of law school, Brokx took a series of summer courses in international law at the University of Madrid that piqued her interest. Upon returning to UB Law, she took a course in EEC law from a visiting professor from Belgium.

"I quickly realized that if the goals of the Treaty of Rome and 1992 were reached, American companies — along with any legal entity and person transacting business with the Community — would have to be aware of the existence and possible applicability of EEC law."

It's tempting to think of U.S. law as setting the model for the world, and



Brokx says that's true in some respects. "Many of the achievements in the American legal system — strict liability, product liability, consumer protection — could be used as a role model by other legal systems," she says.

"But our own legal system could benefit from developments in other legal systems, especially the civil law system. For example, movements toward the Uniform Commercial Code and other codes attempting to create uniformity are unnecessary in many civil law systems, since these legal systems already have simplified uniform rules governing transactions.

"By gaining experience lawyering in other legal systems, a lawyer is able to more critically view his or her own legal system, and thus to better assist in movements to improve it."

Life in Brussels, Brokx says, is expensive but worth the cost. "One certainly cannot claim to be bored here," she says. "I enjoy the cultural differences and the different languages. But it is not America. For example, a friend of mind requested a telephone in October; he didn't receive it until April. One can only be patient. There are 5,000 persons waiting in Brussels to have phones installed. It is another country, and each functions differently and at a different pace."



Peter J. Illig '87 Taipei, Taiwan

"I've always had an interest in international and environmental law," says Peter J. Illig. Now he's combining those interests as a staff attorney for the worldwide environmental firm Ecology & Environment Inc.

"Most of our people are engineers, doing the technical stuff," he says. "What I do is mostly in-house, the regulatory stuff."

In a just-completed eight-month project in Taiwan, Illig's client was the Republic of China Environmental Protection Agency. The far-reaching project involved evaluating the existing and proposed environmental laws, regulation, administrative procedures and regulatory mechanisms in that country. Air emissions, wastewater disposal, industrial waste solid and hazardous waste ocean dumping — all came under

study.

The next phase of the project was to compare Taiwan's pollution-control systems to those in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and Japan.

"Educationally and culturally, it was phenomenal," Illig says of the experience. "I ended up living in a small town where there were not many Westerners.

"There's no zoning, so it's really mixed. You'll have a temple, a factory, a bunch of apartments, another factory, another temple. Only 5 percent of the country has real sewers, so you're dealing with a lot of open sewers, poor sanitary conditions.

"I would not raise a family over there. The quality of life is poor by our standards. There are traffic problems, pollution problems. The Taiwanese have tons of money, and I've never seen a culture pursue money so blindly, if you will."

Illig spent this past summer in British Columbia, Canada, working on the siting of a waste co-generation facility. But now he has returned to Taiwan, and expects to be there another couple of years. Next stop, he says: the People's Republic of China.



Alan A. Ransom '66 Sydney, Australia

Alan A. Ransom has been in Australia since 1979 and works as a full-time barrister at the Edmund Barston Chambers. In addition, he teaches anti-trust and consumer protection courses, part time, as a visiting associate professor of law at Sydney University of Technology School of Law.



Ransom came to Australia as a professor of anti-trust, and taught for 10 years before returning to full-time practice — “on the theory,” he says, “that the only difference between a rut and a grave is depth.”

His practice now is concerned primarily with anti-trust and consumer protection, though he also does corporate and commercial work. In addition, he has published widely — three books and, he adds wryly, “enough articles to choke a shredder.”

As for the legal life in Australia: “It’s great,” he reports, “but much more traditional than American law — especially when practicing as a barrister in a divided Bar, as I am.”

In addition, Ransom says, Australia presents the working lawyer with ideal living conditions and a fine legal system. His office is in a skyscraper in downtown Sydney. It’s only a three-minute walk through the Australian sunshine to state

and federal court buildings.

“I can’t think of a single negative aspect,” he says, “except that it’s a long way from my family in Connecticut.”



Wayne T. Alexander '79 Tokyo, Japan

The magic of Mickey Mouse has spread to Japan, and Wayne T. Alexander is helping to make it happen. Alexander is the director of business and legal affairs and counsel for Walt Disney Attractions Japan Ltd., a wholly owned Japanese subsidiary of the Walt Disney Co.

“My main responsibility is to manage the Walt Disney Co.’s licensing program

at Tokyo Disneyland,” Alexander says. “The company has licensed its copyrights, know-how and trademarks to a Japanese company which owns and operates the theme park. Last year this licensing program alone produced over \$50 million in royalty income.”

Additionally, Alexander supervises Japanese investigators and outside legal counsel in identifying and eliminating unauthorized use of Disney’s intellectual properties throughout Japan.

Recently, he says, Disney succeeded in obtaining a temporary injunction against a service mark infringer under Japan’s Unfair Competition Law. Japan, he says, does not have a service mark law, and the injunction establishes a good precedent for service mark protection. “Through aggressive enforcement of rights and participation in legislative activities, I believe Disney is helping to shape Japan’s laws on intellectual property,” he says.

Alexander credits the late Professor Laufer with advising him to go to Japan, back in 1976. “He foresaw Japan’s world economic leadership and told me that a Japanese-speaking attorney would be in high demand.” Alexander didn’t leave for Japan, however, until 1985, when he was appointed senior counsel for the Sony Corp.

Previously, he worked for the State of New York licensing computer services and spent a year studying the Japanese language. He joined Disney more than a year ago.

“Working in Japan as an expatriate for a well-known United States company has many advantages and few disadvantages for me,” Alexander says. “The company has made the position attractive. A competitive salary, home, company car, health club membership and other amenities are provided. Generally, a

Wayne Alexander



corporate expatriate in Japan enjoys a standard of living higher than the typical Japanese person.

"Disadvantages usually arise from cultural differences, but these are becoming fewer. For example, up until last year a good hot dog was impossible to get. This year, New York-style hot dogs are being sold by a chain of stores.

"At this time, I do not know whether I will return to the United States. For now, Japan is my home and work."



Kurt E. Amend '84
New Delhi, India

Kurt E. Amend had always wanted to enter the Foreign Service. He took the exam when he was 22, and got nowhere with it. Six years later, he tried again.

Now he is second secretary and vice consul at the American Embassy in New

Delhi, India, where he has been assigned since February 1989. Supervising a staff of seven Indian employees of the embassy, he adjudicates non-immigrant and immigrant visa applications. It's not the practice of law, he says, but it does require a thorough understanding of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1954.

Six months of Hindi language training in Washington, D.C., preceded his assignment, and the language is essential for both professional and private life. "Although English is spoken throughout India," he says, "even a modicum of Hindi (and in Delhi, one soon picks up a smattering of Punjabi) opens doors socially and professionally.

"Still, for one raised in the Midwest and at times too encumbered by occidental ways of thinking and interacting with people, the challenges of living and working in India are ongoing."

He describes his living and working conditions as "excellent." Amend lives in housing leased by the U.S. government for its employees in a residential neighborhood of New Delhi. "I maintain a household staff of three," he reports, "including a cook/housekeeper, dhobi (laundryman) and outside sweeper.

"India is a fascinating — albeit at times frustrating — place to live. The blend of languages, ethnic groups, culture and history is at first overwhelming and never ceases to amaze.

"I have taken advantage of the chance to travel and have seen the Himalayas, the desert palaces of Rajasthan, the lush tropical forests of Kerala, and more.

"And as a means of exorcising work-related tensions, I have taken up horseback riding and am now dabbling in the sport of polo. 'Dabbling' means I still fall from the horse — and on occasion hit the polo ball with my stick."

Faculty Research Interests Span the Globe

Within faculty offices at O'Brian Hall, research into a variety of international legal issues is taking place. That scholarship will eventually be shared with the world through publications and lectures, and with UB Law students through classroom instruction. While it is not possible to include all of the international scholastic endeavors of the law faculty, following are some of their activities abroad this summer.

Faculty are adept at finding the funding sources necessary to travel and research overseas, according to tax Professor **Victor Thuronyi**, who has been doing research and consulting for various Latin American governments over the past several years. A visit to Colombia in 1987 resulted in his co-authoring a book on the Colombian income tax, which arose from a consultancy to the Colombian government.

This summer, he acted as a consultant to the Guatemalan government as part of a USAID project. He also traveled to Brazil, Argentina and Chile on a Fulbright grant to study inflation adjustment of the income tax.

Thuronyi says his broad interest is advising on ways to tax wealthy individuals in Latin America, a job that is "not easy, but which provides a challenge I enjoy." Given the current political situation, he doesn't see much chance for immediate reforms, but hopes some of his recommendations will be used in the future. "I may make numerous recommendations and they'll incorporate or use a few — and that's some consolation," he says.

Thuronyi's global connections go back to his days at Cambridge University in England, where he earned an M.A. before attending Harvard Law School. Before coming to UB Law, he practiced tax law in Washington, D.C., then accepted a post in the Office of Tax Legislative Counsel in the U.S. Treasury Department, where he helped produce proposals that resulted in the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

Introducing law students to the realm of international law through the Geneva internship program is only one of Professor **Virginia A. Leary's** interests. A co-founder and director of UB's Graduate Group on

Human Rights Law and Policy, Leary spent three weeks this summer teaching in Strasbourg. She also spent a week in Poland as a delegate to the University's new exchange program with Jagiellonian University in Krakow, before beginning a year-long sabbatical in Geneva.

In addition to teaching, Leary is vice president of the American Society of International Law and serves on the board of directors of the International Labor Organization and the human rights monitoring group, Asia Watch, among numerous others. Her particular interest is Asia.

Professor **George Kannar**, also active in the Human Rights Center, spent a week in Geneva with Leary this summer. "It's like being with the shadow Secretary General," he says. "Everyone knows her. You meet more important people in one day at the UN with her than you would with (UN Secretary) Javier Perez de Cueller."

Geneva is Leary's second hometown, the city where she earned a Ph.D. from the Graduate Institution of International Studies. She also graduated from the University of Chicago Law School, and the Hague Academy of International Law, in the Netherlands. Leary was an official in the International Labor Office in Geneva prior to joining the UB Law faculty.

Sharing an interest in Asia, Professor **Isabel Marcus** returned to the People's Republic of China this summer. Her teaching stint in Beijing was cut short last summer by the violent suppression of the student strike and reform movement in Tiananmen Square. Last summer's events have left many people deeply troubled, she says. "They realize direct confrontation is not a good idea. There seems to be a lot of soul-searching."

For four weeks, she taught American Administrative Law at People's University. Her students were government legal cadres. According to Marcus, the Chinese do not put great stock in lawyers because of a long history of alternative dispute resolution.

"To be the plaintiff or defendant in a lawsuit is a dishonor. It means you haven't been able to settle it another way," she explains. Despite the disparity in culture and norms, her students wanted to learn about the separation of powers in the American system.

These students were extremely diligent and hard-working, and are concerned about China's future and place in the community of nations. One thing she found troubling

was the widespread desire that economic development should take precedence over environmental issues and human rights. Another concern was China's newly installed administrative law code. "The problem of how to standardize the administration of justice in a country that size is staggering," she says.

Professor **Lucinda Finley** spent the first weeks of August in Australia attending a conference on Gender and International Law. In addition, she gave lectures to law faculties at the Universities of Sydney, La Trobe and New South Wales based on portions of a book she is writing on tort damages and reproductive harm.

Injuries from products such as IUDs and the drug DES are a problem in countries other than the United States, she says, as drug companies tend to export products even after they have been banned at home. Finley points to New Zealand as being particularly troublesome in this regard, since New Zealand law does not permit product liability suits. ■



Daniel O'Donnell '77 Geneva, Switzerland

Negotiating the politically tricky web of the international human rights system is part of the job for Daniel O'Donnell. As an attorney working with Defense for Children International, he helps draft international instruments.

Daniel O'Donnell



prepares legal arguments for international human rights bodies, and develops educational materials on the legal aspects of children's rights.

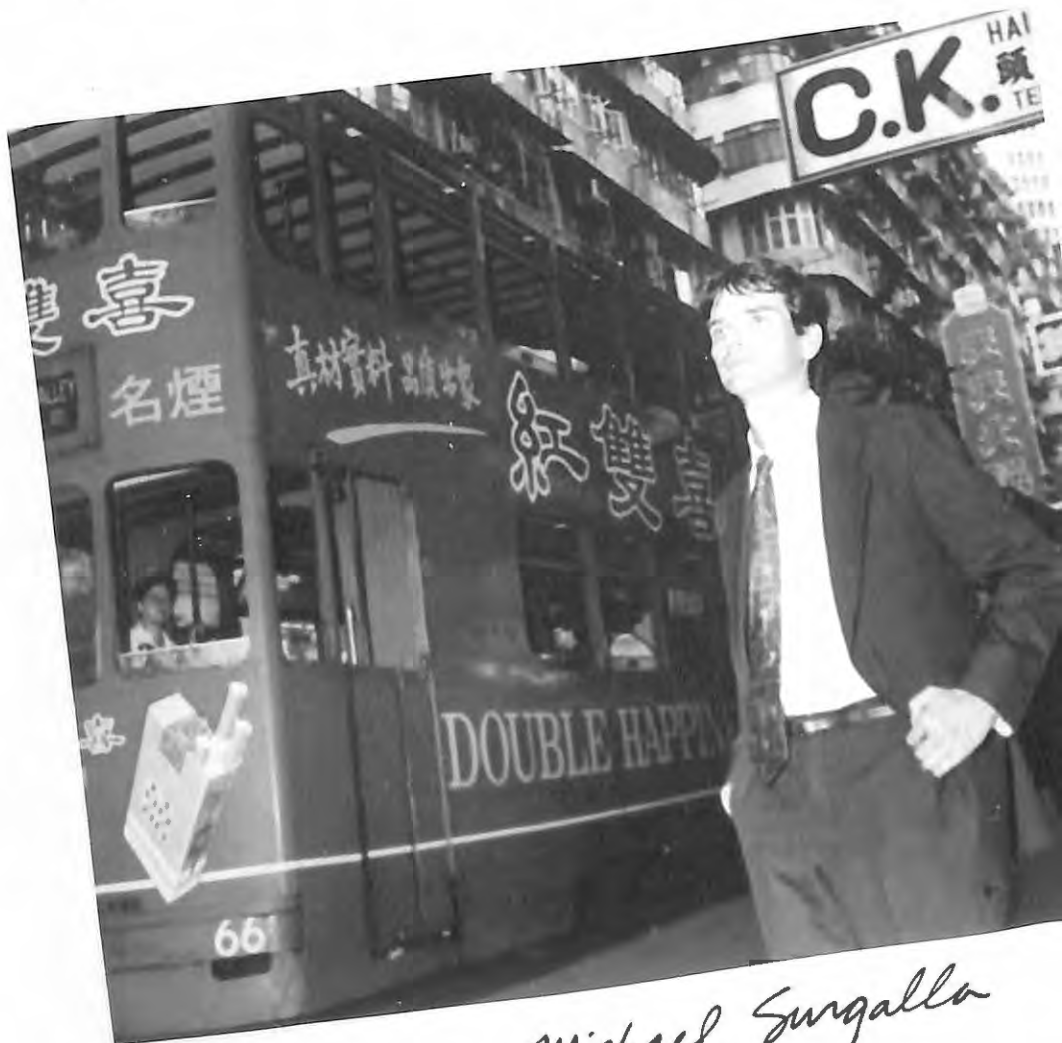
Compared with more traditional lawyering, "The material rewards tend to be less, and the non-material rewards more substantial," O'Donnell says of his work with the Geneva-based human rights organization. "Working in the human rights area internationally, although frustrating at times, has provided me with unique experiences, both personally and professionally."

O'Donnell has been in his position for three years. Previously, he spent time abroad as an attorney in Brazil and Costa Rica, as well as an intern at another Geneva-based human rights organization just after his graduation from UB Law School.

O'Donnell lives with his wife and children in the countryside of France, not far from Geneva. "Working hours are reasonable, vacations are longer than in the U.S., and the quality of life is generally good," he says. "The main disadvantage is the distance from one's parents and siblings."

O'Donnell says he has learned several languages in the course of his professional career. "Although one's professional opportunities and abilities are often somewhat limited while one is in the learning process, once one has reached a reasonable level of competence in the relevant language . . . unique professional opportunities arise."

Remembering his years at UB Law, O'Donnell places special value on the courses "which gave us an appreciation of the great reasons behind the law and the way it develops, whether from a historical, sociological or philosophical point of view." That's a solid foundation that translates well in any language.



Michael Surgalla

Michael J. Surgalla Jr. '82 Washington, D.C.

In his work for the U.S. Department of Justice, Michael Surgalla deals with a whole range of international players and issues. But it was postgraduate studies in London, England, that helped to develop his global perspective.

At the London School of Economics in 1985-86, Surgalla was in the company

of lawyers from more than 80 countries. "Living abroad gave me a different and useful perspective in handling cases involving political asylum, permanent residence and other immigration issues," he says.

In addition, he came to appreciate the quirks and rewards of British society. "In order to immerse myself in the local culture, I chose to live in a north London neighborhood away from the hordes of tourists. Given the number of Americans who visit London each year, I was surprised and somewhat amused by the initial curiosity shown by many of my neighbors.

"Within a short time, however, I felt very much at home. With the obvious advantage of a common language, cultural obstacles were minimal. However, with union labor staffing the university libraries (the concept of 'work study' seems to be severely limited in England), access to research facilities can be more limited than in the United States."

Now back in Washington, Surgalla works for the Office of International Affairs, a support service for federal, state and foreign prosecutors in matters of international criminal law. The OIA oversees requests for extradition to and from the United States; and together with the State Department, it helps to negotiate treaties and other international agreements affecting law enforcement.

"Working with different legal systems is part of our routine at OIA. We maintain daily contact with our counterparts all over the world, as well as with State Department officials, and spend considerable time providing advice regarding foreign and international law to prosecutors and law enforcement agencies.

"Cases involving issues such as international terrorism, drug interdiction, money laundering and organized crime make the work both interesting and challenging," he says.



John W. Rogers III '89
Munich, Germany

At any given time here," says John W. Rogers, "there will be a large contingent of Western and Eastern European attorneys and professors, as well as many

other experts from the Soviet Union, China, Africa, Japan and other parts of the globe." "Here" is the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Patent, Copyright, and Competition Law, where Rogers is currently the only American fellow. The institute attracts "the top talent in these fields," he says.

Named after the physicist who developed the quantum theory of thermodynamics, the Max Planck Institute conducts research — within an international and comparative context — in intellectual property, unfair competition and selected areas of economic law. It's funded largely by the German government.

Rogers is concentrating on intellectual property law, media law and international trade law. In addition to writing two just-published articles in the *European Intellectual Property Review*, he is doing some consulting work and also editing a

book on the recent European Community Insider Trading Directive.

"Practicing law overseas is interesting and exciting," Rogers says. "Work is much the same as it would be in any law office in the States. It is, however, very exciting to make contacts in legal circles here in Europe, as I am exposed to many new methods of legal thinking, and contacts made now can be valuable for my future clients who need legal services on questions of international law."

Rogers, who is fluent in German, is considering learning an Eastern European language as that area of Europe continues to move toward economic and political openness.

"UB Law did an excellent job of giving me the opportunity to prepare myself for this position," Rogers says. "As with any thing, you get in return that which you have invested. UB's continuing international focus will stand it in good stead." ■



John Rogers III